

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

19 January 2018

January!

In the middle of the dark and cold English winter, when the gales are gusting and the frosty ground crunches underfoot, do you find yourself dreaming of warmer weather? Now, don't get me wrong, I like our seasonal climate and enjoy an invigorating winter walk with Mollie. There are times, however, in the middle of January when my mind drifts to the lighter and warmer days ahead, the arrival of snowdrops and daffodils, the dawn chorus, the smell of freshly mown grass and the coming alive of the whole-school site when the children are able to play on the school fields. At this time of the year, I have found that just looking at people in a warmer climate is uplifting. Watching the highlights of the cricket in Australia last week, with spectators in shorts and sandals, sipping refreshing cold drinks under the searing antipodean heat made me feel positively cheery. So did the sunny South African photographs which landed on my desk this week, showing the visit of one of our St Faith's families to Makukhanye over the Christmas break. Here they are. The Buchli family's account of their visit to Makukhanye is in the pastoral section of this newsletter. They clearly enjoyed their visit and the glorious South African summer.

Makukhanye School

We have been supporting Makukhanye since 2003 and, in recent times, have strengthened our partnership. I use the word 'partnership' carefully, as the relationship is mutually beneficial. As a result of last summer's hugely successful visit to Makukhanye, we are committed to running this trip every two years, for pupils in Years 7 and 8, so every child in the school will have the opportunity to visit Makukhanye in the future. The next trip is in July 2019 and very well subscribed.

Mr Johnson (the trip leader) and I are in constant communication with the St Faith's trust fund lawyers and committee in South Africa to ensure that every penny of our fundraising is used effectively. Currently, St Faith's is funding a weekend meal programme (for the selected pupils who don't have any food at home over the weekend), chairs for the younger pupils (as the school has grown and not all pupils have chairs in their classrooms), re-painting of many of the classrooms (which has been completed) and transport for selected families to travel to the

authorities to obtain identity documents. Needless to say, the Makukhanye Headmaster, his staff and all the pupils we met last summer are enormously grateful. We really are making a difference. There is a page on our website dedicated to Makukhanye which can be accessed via this [link](#).

The impact on our own pupils, parents and staff who have visited has been significant too. Since the 2017 trip, a parent action group has been formed, which will help us to provide additional support to Makukhanye. Our link with this township school in Jeffrey's Bay plays an important role in shaping our pupils in to global citizens, developing early in life a mind-set of charity and philanthropy, helping them to understand and appreciate their place in the world and crucially, how privileged we are.

Entrance Assessments

Increasingly, we are attracting families from all around the world. The school has been enhanced by the rich blend of nationalities and cultures, providing a stimulating environment for our children to learn and grow. Tomorrow morning, I will be welcoming a large number of families to St Faith's for our annual entrance assessments for admission to Years 3-8. As usual I expect the parents will be more nervous than their children but we will be doing everything we can to calm any nerves and ensure everyone enjoys their visit to the School.

National Gymnastics Championships

On Sunday, we are hosting, for the second time, the finals of the ISGA 4 piece National Gymnastics Championships. It is a privilege to be holding such a prestigious event and I am grateful to our large team of staff and parents who will be helping out on the day. A particularly big thank you to Mr and Mrs North and Miss Butler, three of our gym coaches, who are coordinating the whole event. With 40 teams from 23 schools, some as far away as Dorset, Shropshire, Wales and Belgium, it should be a great day of gymnastics.

Drama Productions

Rehearsals are in full swing for the many forthcoming Drama productions: the Year 1 musical (2.30-3pm on 7th March), the Year 4 Drama sharing performance based on mini-pantomimes (3-3.40pm on 28th February), the Year 6 production of 'Madagascar' (7-8.30pm on 21st and 22nd March) and the Year 8 production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' (7-8.30pm on 23rd and 24th May). I do hope that you are able to join us for at least one of these events.

Finally..

I thought you might like to see photos of the after school activities I visited this week.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell